



Alpha Gamma Delta Foundation Announces New Scholarship

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE [INDIANAPOLIS, August 1, 2019]—The Alpha Gamma Delta Foundation announced the establishment of the Pearl Johnson Essary Scholarship Sunday, August 4, at the Alpha Gamma Delta house in Jonesboro, Arkansas. An endowment will fund the scholarship and benefit collegiate women of the Epsilon Zeta Chapter of Alpha Gamma Delta at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Arkansas, with preference given to members pursuing studies in English, creative writing or digital marketing.

Pearl Johnson Essary was a founding alumnae member of Alpha Gamma Delta at Epsilon Zeta in 1948. She worked as the postmaster on campus, where she interacted with hundreds of students who passed through the post office doors each day. Throughout the course of her life, Essary continued to correspond by letter with many students long after they had graduated. She enjoyed young people and their enthusiasm for life, which garnered her role as the sorority's first Social Advisor.

While employed at what was then called Arkansas State College, Essary returned to school and completed English literature courses. She later served as an editor for the college's first literary journal, *The Arrow*. Essary held a lifelong love of poetry and the written word.

Essary's daughter and granddaughters are also members of Alpha Gamma Delta. Daughter Sue Davidson Bonner became a member in 1950 and served as Epsilon Zeta Chapter President in 1953. Granddaughters Debbie Bonner Perkins and Dee Anna Bonner Smith are initiates of the Gamma Zeta Chapter at the University of Memphis. They, along with Susan Bonner Patton, created the endowment to honor their family's matriarch.

"Mother was a prolific writer of poetry and letters. She corresponded with ministers of our faith from all over the world, encouraging them in their work. She had the uncanny ability to know when friends, family and even strangers needed a note of good cheer," Bonner said.

Perkins views her grandmother's accomplishments through the lens of her legacy.

"We were reared in a family of strong, resilient women. Our mother and grandmother instilled in us the importance of art and beauty and education. My sisters and I have been fortunate to pursue career paths that allowed our natural talents to develop," said Perkins. "It is our sincere hope that this scholarship will aid other young women on their path of growth and development."

To be eligible for the Pearl Johnson Essary scholarship, applicants must be a member of Alpha Gamma Delta, in Good Standing and a full-time student entering their junior or senior year at Arkansas State University. The Alpha Gamma Delta Foundation Scholarship Committee will determine recipients of the scholarship each spring. Endowments are permanently restricted funds managed by the Alpha Gamma Delta Foundation. The amount of each scholarship award may vary and will be determined based upon the value of the endowment and the Foundation Board of Trustees.

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About Alpha Gamma Delta Foundation

The Alpha Gamma Delta Foundation, a 501(c)(3) public charity, supports the philanthropic, educational and leadership efforts of Alpha Gamma Delta, an international women's fraternity. It is committed to impacting and enriching local communities.

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